

**Good morning  
to the families and friends  
of our fallen military heroes,  
to service members  
retired and active duty,  
to our distinguished guests.**

**Fellow citizens,  
today we join our entire nation  
in remembering  
the men and women who have died  
in service to America.**

**We remember those soldiers and  
Marines who died liberating the  
Marianas in World War Two,  
and our own islanders who served as  
Marine scouts in that war,  
some of them buried here at this  
cemetery.**

**We remember our  
sons and daughters  
who gave all —  
at least 4 in Vietnam,**

**and 19 active service members who  
have died since we went to war  
after 9/11.**

**We bow our heads in remembrance  
of all who served  
and are now interred here  
in this cemetery  
and in burial grounds  
throughout the Marianas.**

**Though we are the newest members  
of the American family,  
the blood spilled in our islands,**

**the sacrifices of our own sons  
and daughters,  
and the service of those buried here  
bind us all to the long,  
sometimes turbulent,  
sometimes shameful  
history of our nation.**

**Memorial Day began in 1868,  
after the great Civil War.**

**That war was fought  
for freedom,  
to end the sin of slavery**

**and preserve the principle that all of us are equal in the eyes of God.**

**Major General John Logan,  
who led a group of Union veterans  
after that war,  
chose May 30  
as a day of remembrance.**

**He called upon the nation  
to decorate the graves of fallen soldiers  
“with the choicest flowers  
of springtime,”  
and to guard their graves  
with “sacred vigilance.”**

**So the tradition began.**

**One hundred years later,  
Congress made Memorial Day  
a national holiday,  
a day to remember all service members  
who died in all of America's wars.**

**And on this day  
at 3 o'clock in the afternoon  
all citizens are asked —  
wherever they are  
and whatever they are doing —  
to stop in silence**

**and remember those who died  
in pursuit of peace and freedom:**

**one million men and women  
over the history of our nation.**

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**And so we come together  
to remember, to pray,  
and to tend to the graves  
of these brave men and women.**

**But what more can we do,  
to honor the memories**

**of those who have given their lives  
for our nation?**

**Today, let me invite all of you  
to join fellow citizens around America  
in the Veterans History Project.**

**This is a movement  
to collect the stories of  
service members,  
and to preserve these stories  
for all time.**



**The Library of Congress  
is accepting  
original photographs, letters, journals,  
even works of art  
that tell the stories  
of our military heroes  
now laid to rest.**

**Many of the men and women  
we honor today did not get to share  
their stories  
when they were still with us.**

**But those who remember and love them  
can help keep their memories  
and records of service alive  
for future generations  
by participating in this project.**

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**I know that Memorial Day is about  
honoring our departed service  
members.**

**But there are many veterans who are  
still with us, who have yet  
to share their stories.**

**And the Library of Congress is also accepting recordings, the first-hand accounts of those still alive.**

**We can honor the veterans in our families and community by interviewing them and submitting their first-hand accounts to the Library of Congress.**

**Future generations will be able to learn from them - long after we have all left this earth.**

**You can help.**

**Come in to your congressional office.**

**We will assist anyone  
who wants to participate  
in this project.**

**We can set you up with fieldkits  
provided by the Library of Congress  
and also help with  
interviewing veterans  
who are willing to  
share their stories.**

**The congressional office  
has already conducted  
several of these interviews and  
submitted collections to the  
Library of Congress.**

**But we can add so much more  
to the Veterans History Project  
if we have many people here in the  
Marianas actively involved.**

**Working together,  
we can make more days  
Memorial Days**

**and help preserve for posterity  
the memory of those who served.**

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**Finally,  
we can honor their service  
with our own acts of service.**

**It has been ten months  
since Typhoon Soudelor struck,  
and American Memorial Park  
remains in need of restoration.**

**We can complain.**

**We can blame.**

**Or we can do something to help.**

**I am calling for a day of service  
to help clean up American Memorial  
Park.**

**It will be hard work.**

**But I invite everyone  
who loves the Park  
and who respects those  
whom the Park commemorates  
to join this day of service.**

**Let your congressional office know if  
you would like to help, and  
we will contact you once we  
finalize details with the Park Service.**

**Let us help restore our Park  
so that it is once again  
a fitting memorial  
to those who gave their lives here  
in World War II.**

**We all have a duty  
to guard the graves and memorials  
of our war dead  
with sacred vigilance,**



**as Major Logan put it more than a century ago.**

**Let us always remember  
the men and women who died  
in service to our nation,  
whose sacrifices made possible  
the peace and freedom  
in which we live today.**

**And let us honor those who served  
with our own acts of service  
to community and country.**

**Thank you.**

**God bless our fallen heroes.**

**God bless you all.**

**God bless the Northern Mariana Islands  
and the United States of America.**